

Message Text

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ACTION A-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2119

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 5175

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (EAGLETON, THOMAS: MATHIAS, CHARLES)

SUBJECT: CODELS EAGLETON/MATHIAS VISIT TO EGYPT

REF: CAIRO 5016

1. SUMMARY: SENATORS THOMAS EAGLETON AND CHARLES MATHIAS PAID USEFUL VISIT TO EGYPT APRIL 12-15. SENATORS WERE FIRST U.S. CONGREEMAN TO VISIT SINAI FIELD MISSION (SFM), APRIL 13. ON APRIL 14 CODELS SAW PRESIDENT SADAT, PRIMIN MANDUH SALEM, SPEAKER OF PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY MAR'I, AND WERE BRIEFED BY AMBASSADOR. MEETING WITH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FAHMY CANCELLED DUE FAHMY'S ILLNESS. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING DELAYED ARRIVAL APRIL 12, SENATORS EAGLETON AND MATHIAS, ACCOMPANIED BY RESPECTIVE AIDES ATWOOD AND ROSSITER AND CONTROL OFFICERS LOWRIE AND CRAIG, MADE TEN-HOUR VISIT TO SINAI EARLY WARNING ZONE APRIL 13 TO VIEW SFM WATCH STATIONS AND BASE CAMP. EGYPTIANS PROVIDED MILITARY HELICOPTER FOR TRIP FROM CAIRO TO EAST BANK SUEZ CANAL. CODELS MET BY UNEF COMMANDER LILJESTRAND AND SFM DIRECTOR THORNE UPON ARRIVAL. CONTINGENT OF FINNISH TROOPS PROVIDED SECURITY FOR ENTIRE TRIP. SFM VEHICLES TRANSPORTED CODELS FROM LANDING SITE TO SFM HEADQUARTERS VIA MITLA WEST WATCH STATION, THROUGH MITLA PASS TO J LINE AND MITLA EAST WATCH STATION, CONFIDENTIAL

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OVER DIRT ROAD BETWEEN PASSES, TO TEMPORARY HEAD-

QUARTERS AT GIDDI PASS. BOTH EGYPTIAN E-1 STATION AND ISRAELI J-1 STATIONS VISIBLE FROM BASE CAMP ALTHOUGH THEY WERE NOT VISITED. CODELS WERE BRIEFED BY SINAI CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVES (E-SYSTEMS) ON WORKING OF SENSORS AT MITLA WEST WATCH STATION. SENATORS WERE INTERESTED IN BACKGROUND OF SFM PERSONNEL AND LIFE IN SINAI, AND ALSO VIEWED NEWLY-ARRIVED ZACHARY MODULES AT PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS SITE. BRIEFING BY SINAI FIELD MISSION CHIEF THORNE WAS FOLLOWED BY EXCELLENET LUNCHEON IN SFM CAFETERIA. CONDITIONS AT TEMPORARY BASE CAMP ARE BLEAK WITH ONLY BAREST NECESSITIES AVAILABLE. LACK OF AIR CONDITIONING AT TEMPORARY CAMP PROVING A PROBLEM AS HOT WEATHER IS RAPIDLY CLOSING IN. PREPARATION OF PERMANENT BASE CAMP, HOWEVER, PROCEEDING WELL AND PERSONNEL SEEMED BELIEVE THAT WHEN BASE CAMP FINISHED IN MID-JUNE CONDITIONS WILL BE MORE TOLERABLE.

3. AMBASSADOR HOSTED RECEPTION FOR CODELS AT RESIDENCE AFTER RETURN FROM SINAI, APRIL 13. MININFO OTEIFY AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MUHAMMAD RIAD LED SIZABLE CROWD OF NOTABLES WHO TURNED OUT TO MEET SENATORS EAGLETON AND MATHIAS.

4. CODELS MET WITH PRIMIN MANDUH SALEM MORNING APRIL 14. SENATOR MATHIAS ASKED ABOUT GOE POLICY VIS-A-VIS LEBANON. PRIMIN REPLIED THAT THERE WILL BE A SETTLEMENT IN QUOTE A FEW WEEKS UNQUOTE, THAT SYRIAN INTERVENTION HAS NOT DONE ANYTHING TO HELP SITUATION AND WILL BE ENDED. SALEM PREDICTED SYRIANS WILL WITHDRAW AND LET LEBANESE REACH SOLUTION, WHICH IS WHAT SYRIANS SHOULD HAVE DONE IN FIRST PLACE. SENATOR MATHIAS MENTIONED INTEREST OF CONGRESS IN POPULATION CONTROL AND ASKED ABOUT EGYPT'S PROGRAMS FOR BIRTH CONTROL. PRIMIN REPLIED THAT POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, NOT RPT NOT BIRTH CONTROL, IS EGYPT'S PROBLEM. HE SAID THAT WAYS MUST BE FOUND TO SETTLE PEOPLE IN DESERT AREAS AND TO RAISE STANDARDS OF LIVING IN SMALL COMMUNITIES. CONFIDENTIAL

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HE ALSO SAID HOUSING PROBLEM IS ACUTE, NOTING THAT MANY WORKERS COMMUTE AS MUCH AS 100 KM. TO CAIRO EVERY DAY FOR WORK BECAUSE THEY CANNOT FIND HOUSING IN CAIRO. SALEM SAID HE IS ATTACKING THIS PROBLEM BY RECENTLY DECREEEING THAT FOR NEXT THREE YEARS ALL UNIVERSITY GRADUATES, WHO ARE CURRENTLY GUARANTEED GOVERNMENT JOBS, WILL HAVE TO RETURN TO VILLAGES FOR EMPLOYMENT. THIS WILL INVOLVE ABOUT

75,000 GRAUDATES PER YEAR. SALEM NOTED THAT
WORK FORCE INCREASES BY 300,000 PERSONS OVER YEAR.
PRIMIN LOOKED TO PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH TO PROVIDE
ADDITIONAL JOBS IN FUTURE.

5. BOTH SENATORS ASKED WHAT AMERICA COULD DO TO
HELP EGYPTIAN ECONOMY IN FORM OF AID PRIORITIES.
SALEM REPLIED WITHOUT HESITATION THAT AMERICAN AID
SHOULD BENEFIT MAN-IN-THE-STREET, SHOULD GIVE HIM
A SENSE THAT USG DOING SOMETHING FOR GOOD OF ALL
EGYPTIAN PEOPLE. SALEM SAID PEOPLE KNEW SOVIETS
WERE HERE AND KNOW WHAT THEY HAVE DONE, E.G. ASWAN
DAM, EVEN THOUGH NO ONE LIKED THEM OR GOT ALONG
WITH THEM. AFTER ABROGATION OF SOVIET TREATY, PEOPLE
WILL THINK THAT THEY WILL NOT GET ANYTHING FROM
SOVIETS AND THEY WILL BE LOOKING TO SEE WHAT THEY
GET FROM AMERICA. PRIMIN REMINDED SENATORS THAT
ALTHOUGH EGYPTIAN EXPERIENCE WITH THE RUSSIANS HAD BEEN
BITTER ONE, THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO WILL BE
WATCHING HOW AMERICAN/EGYPTIAN RELATIONS UNFOLDS
AND WILL BE ONLY TOO QUICK TO POINT OUT WHERE THE
U.S. HAS FAILED FILL THE GAP LEFT BY SOVIET
DEPARTURE.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2120

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PRIMIN SAID GOVERNMENT CAN CONTROL
THESE ELEMENTS BUT WE MUST DO OUR PART. SENATOR
EAGLETON ASKED IF SOVIETS WOULD WITHDRAW THEIR
TECHNICIANS. SALEM SAID HE THOUGHT NOT BECUASE
THERE ARE STILL SOME PROJECTS TO BE FINISHED.
HOWEVER, SOVIETS MIGHT TRY TO SLOW WORK DOWN AT

SOME PLANTS AND IN THIS WAY WOULD TRY TO PUT PRESSURE ON REGIME. WHEN ASKED ABOUT REPORT THAT FIVE SOVIET TECHNICIANS WERE EXPELLED, SALEM SAID THAT THIS WAS PART OF NORMAL ROTATION, BUT CONCEDED SOVIETS ARE DEFINITELY NOT AS FRIENDLY AS BEFORE. ON PLO, SALEM SAID THAT PALESTINIANS HAD OPPOSED SINAI II DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, BUT THEY KNOW THAT WITHOUT EGYPT THEY CAN ACHIEVE NOTHING. PALESTINIANS AND SYRIANS HAD TRIED TO CREATE TROUBLE FOR EGYPT, BUT NOW RELATIONS ARE BETTER; IN LEBANON PALESTINIANS ARE EVEN ASKING EGYPT FOR LOGISTICAL SUPPORT. ASKED IF PLO COULD MAKE TROUBLE INSIDE EGYPT, SALEM REPLIED THAT THERE ARE 50,000 PALESTINIANS IN EGYPT, BUT HE WAS CONFIDENT GOVERNMENT CAN HANDLE THEM.

6. SALEM THEN GAVE SENATORS DESCRIPTION OF THE THREE FORUM SYSTEM IN PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY, HE EXPLAINED THAT THESE ARE THE PRELIMINARY STEPS TOWARDS RETURN TO PARTIES. HE SAID GOVERNMENT WANTS TO ORGANIZE OPPOSITION TO BRING IT OUT INTO THE OPEN. MAJORITY OF EGYPTIANS BELIEVE THAT ARAB SOCIALIST UNION COULD NO LONGER GROW AND BE A CONFIDENTIAL

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VERY VITAL INSTITUTION, THEY HOPE FORUM STRUCTURE WILL BE MORE ENERGETIC. ASU WAS HEAVILY GOVERNMENTAL, PM SAID, AND WILL NOT WORK FOR FUTURE OF EGYPT.

7. CODELS NEXT MET WITH PEOPLES'S ASSEMBLY SPEAKER SAYYID MAR'I AND MEMBERS OF FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. SPEAKER MAR'I ALLUDED TO OCTOBER 1973 WAR AND SAID THAT IT HAD PROVED THAT CONFLICT IN MIDDLE EAST CANNOT BE SETTLED BY FORCE. PRESIDENT SADAT HAS AFFIRMED MANY TIMES HE IS READY TO SIGN A PEACE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL. AFTER SINAI II AGREEMENT ARAB WORLD SEEMS DIVIDED BETWEEN MODERATES AND EXTREMISTS. EGYPT, HOWEVER, IS PURSUING ONLY REALISTIC POLICY. MAR'I SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH EGYPTIANS APPRECIATE SPECIAL ROLE WHICH AMERICA IS PLAYING, PACE IS NOT FAST ENOUGH. PERHAPS ELECTIONS ARE REASON, BUT HE SAID HISTORY HAS SHOWED THAT ONLY ISRAEL CAN BENEFIT FROM SUCH STALEMATE. MAR'I SAID MANY HAD OBSERVED TO HIM THAT IN ISRAEL DOVES ARE BECOMING HAWKS AND POSITION IS BECOMING INFLEXIBLE. THIS MUST BE CHANGED HE SAID. MAR'I WARNED THAT AMERICA MUST PRODUCE RESULTS TO SUCCEED. EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, MAR'I SAID, KNOW WE ARE CUTTING OUR RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, THEY ARE ASKING WHAT ARE AMERICANS GOING TO DO? MAR'I POINTED

OUT THAT EGYPTIANS NOT ASKING ANYTHING FROM THIS
BREAKING OF RELATIONS, IT WAS DONE FOR EGYPT'S
OWN INTERESTS, BUT PROJECTS WHICH BENEFIT MAN-IN-
THE-STREET SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED.

8. SENATOR MATHIAS ASKED WHAT U.S. MIGHT DO IN
TERMS OF HELPING EGYPT WITH ITS ECONOMIC PRIORITIES.
SPEAKER REPLIED THAT EGYPT NEEDS MARSHALL PLAN TO
HELP RECOVER. ECONOMIC SITUATION IS NOW A CRISIS.
AGAIN MAN-IN-THE STREET WILL BE WATCHING TO SEE
WHAT USG DOES. SPEAKER MENTIONED C-130 SALE, SAYING
THAT IT VERY SYMBOLIC FOR EGYPT AND THAT
CONSIDERING VERY LOOSE RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON AID
TO ISRAEL, A REFUSAL WOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD HERE.

9. LENGTHY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT REPORTED
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REFTEL.

10. CODELS ATTENDED LUNCHEON APRIL 14 HOSTED BY
FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. AN AFTERNOON MEETING
WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY CANCELLED DUE TO
MINISTER'S ILLNESS.

11. SENATOR MATHIAS HAD SECOND MEETING WITH
SPEAKER MARI AT SPEAKER'S REST HOUSE AT PYRAMIDS
AFTERNOON APRIL 14. SUBSTANCE WAS ON INTERNAL
POLITICAL SITUATION (SEPTTEL).

12. CODEL MATHIAS DEPARTED AT 0700 APRIL 15 FOR
DAMASCUS AS SCHEDULED. CODEL EAGLETON'S
DEPARTURE FOR SAUDI ARABIA DELAYED UNTIL 1130
APRIL 16 DUE TO BAD WEATHER.
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